

ART BY NUMBERS

A weekly analysis of the Indian and global art market

Where M.F. Husain's horses stood in the art race

266

The number of M.F. Husain works featuring horses that have been sold in auctions since 2000. Though Husain painted a wide range of subjects, the equine animal was a quintessential signature of his,

appearing in a range of dimensions, and on a variety of materials.

These works have generated sales worth ₹222 crore. The first work featuring this subject to be auctioned was *White Horse* that achieved ₹1.1 lakh in a Sotheby's sale in 1992. Read in context to the highest price ever achieved by the subject—a record established in March earlier this year—wherein Christie's sold a spectacular large-format canvas measuring 50 x 81 inches for ₹7.12 crore, and you would note the market movement of this subject. According to a recently released

Artery India report, between 2014 and 2018, the artist's works sold in auction realized ₹327 crore, of which ₹76.3 crore was from the subject of horses. This is the single-highest tally for a subject for this artist, across all five years for which reviews were conducted since 2000. There were a total of 68 works, 57 of which were canvases, claiming the majority of the turnover at ₹71.6 crore. The highest achieved for a work, on paper, featuring this subject to be sold during this 5-year review is ₹26.34 lakh for a larger-than-the-norm ink and watercolour, measuring 50 x 27 inches that was sold by Saffonart in June 2018. This was just below the all-time high for this medium that stands at ₹28.95 lakh.



An untitled work by M.F. Husain featuring the animal dating back to the early 1960s.